

juice washings.

These reports underscore the need for HBV vaccination of all surgeons and the need to consider these data when developing policies regarding surgical practice restrictions for HBeAg-positive surgeons.

Steep Drop in New Cases of TB in New York City

Dr. Margaret Hamburg, New York City Health Commissioner, announced that the city experienced its most significant drop in new tuberculosis (TB) cases in 15 years; more than \$30 million was spent last year to combat the resurgence of the disease, compared with \$4 million in 1988. New York City, which accounts for about 15% of the nation's TB caseload, showed a decline of 15% in new cases: 3,235 cases in 1993 compared with 3,811 in 1992. Nationwide, the number of TB cases dropped about 5% in 1993.

The decline in cases in New York City is particularly significant because the city has 61% of the nation's cases of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. New York City was among one of the first cities to allow involuntary long-term detention of patients who did not take their medications consistently. The detention of more than 30 patients over the past year has served as a deterrent and helped in control efforts. But Dr. Hamburg said, "The mainstay of tuberculosis control efforts has been a program of directly observed therapy and the program currently follows 1,200 patients, up from fewer than 100 two years ago." Other factors that have contributed to the decline include tripling of the staff in the health department, expansion of TB services in the city's TB clinics, and better methods for early identification of cases.

FROM: *New York Times* March 15, 1994.

NIOSH Appoints New Director

Dr. Linda Rosenstock was appointed director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), part of the CDC. Rosenstock will lead NIOSH, which, together with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), was created by an Act of Congress in 1970. NIOSH has research and public health mandates from Congress and serves as a scientific partner to OSHA and the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the two Department of Labor agencies responsible for regulating the safety and health of working conditions.

Dr. Rosenstock, previously professor of medicine and environmental health and director of the occupational and environmental medicine program

at the University of Washington, conducted research and published extensively on occupational diseases, including asbestos-related disease and the effects of exposure to pesticides. She founded one of the first hospital-based, university-affiliated occupational medicine clinics in the country.

CDC Director Dr. David Satcher said, "She is eminently suited to lead NIOSH in its mission of improving the safety of our work force. Among the challenges facing Dr. Rosenstock are increasing the visibility of occupational safety and health and working more closely with other federal agencies. To enhance efforts to meet these challenges, Dr. Rosenstock and the NIOSH central headquarters will be located in the Public Health Service offices in Washington, DC." Hospital epidemiologists will be watching NIOSH closely for its role in the CDC's final recommendation on respiratory protection for healthcare workers against tuberculosis, which is expected to include the development of a new certification process for respirators.

Inadequate Disinfection of Dialyzer O-Rings Responsible for Outbreak of Gram-Negative Bacteremia

Following hemodialysis treatment, 11 patients in a university outpatient hemodialysis unit had 12 episodes of primary gram-negative bacteremia caused by *Pseudomonas cepacia*, *Xanthomonas maltophilia*, *Citrobacter freundii*, *Acinetobacter calcoaceticus var. anitratus*, or *Enterobacter cloacae*. In 11 episodes, symptoms developed within 3 hours of starting hemodialysis. A matched-pair, case-control study found that case patients were more likely to have received high-flux dialysis with Hemoflow F-80 dialyzers (odds ratio, 11) than were controls. O-rings from dialyzers used by bacteremic patients were culture-positive for the organism responsible for bacteremia.

Three of the four dialyzers were disinfected using a standard automated method with a hydrogen peroxide-peracetic acid germicide, and cultures were obtained again 72 hours later; the O-rings of all three dialyzers remained culture-positive. Simulated dialysis using dialyzers with contaminated O-rings caused blood pathway contamination despite reprocessing. When the disinfection method for the F-80 dialyzers included removal and complete disinfection of the O-rings, O-ring and blood pathway cultures were consistently negative. After this procedure was made routine, no episodes of primary gram-negative bacteremia occurred during the next 6 months.

FROM: Flaherty JP, Garcia-Houchins S, Chudy R, Arnow PM. An outbreak of gram-negative bacteremia traced to contaminated O-rings in reprocessed dialyzers. *Ann Intern Med* 1993;119:1072-1078.

Legal Guide for HIV-Infected Healthcare Workers

The American Association of Physicians for Human Rights (AAPHR), announced the publication of "The Legal Rights and Obligations of HIV Infected Health Care Workers." The 47-page guide provides information on employment discrimination, state policies on HIV-infected healthcare workers, informed consent law, privacy and confidentiality, and insurance issues. Ben Schatz, AAPHR's Executive Director said that AAPHR also launched the Medical Expertise Retention Program to provide a variety of support services for HIV-positive physicians and other healthcare workers. The guide is available from AAPHR, 273 Church St., San Francisco CA 94114; telephone (415) 255-4547.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Extends Occupational HIV Coverage to All Its Employees

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts has insured all of its employees against occupational HIV infection. A spokesperson for the company said that it was one of the most generous plans in the country. Under this plan, any Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts employee, including medical, professional, administrative, and maintenance employee, who tests positive for HIV within a year after reporting an occupational exposure, is eligible for benefit payment four times the affected person's salary with a maximum of \$500,000 and a minimum of \$100,000. This benefit is an extra layer of protection beyond other coverage and will not affect the worker's eligibility for workers compensation for a job-related illness.

19th International Congress of Chemotherapy to Be Held in Montreal in July 1995

The 19th International Congress of Chemotherapy will be held in Montreal, Canada, July 16-21, 1995. The goal of this conference is to improve clinical care and the quality of life of patients suffering from infectious diseases and cancer. Top-

ics of symposia, workshops, panel discussions, and case studies will include prevention, advances in rapid diagnosis, chemotherapy, clinical drug trials, and emergence of drug resistance. For additional information, contact the 19th ICC Secretariat, 205 Viger Ave. West, Suite 207, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Z 1G2.

Intravenous Immune Globulin Removed from World Market

In response to inquiries regarding an action by Baxter Healthcare Corporation to remove an immune globulin intravenous (IGIV) product, Gammagard R, from the market, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a news release confirming the action. The product, Gammagard, also is distributed as Polygam R by the American Red Cross.

The Hyland Division of Baxter Healthcare Corporation of Glendale California has removed its IGIV products from the worldwide market because of their possible implication in the transmission of hepatitis, including hepatitis C. Baxter recently reported that three patients in Spain and two in Sweden have been found to have hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection after receiving Baxter's IGIV product. Additional patients have evidence of hepatitis and remain under study. On the basis of the temporal association with product administration, the FDA regards these cases as potentially having resulted from administration of the IGIV. However, no cases of viral transmission from this product have been confirmed.

Baxter's IGIV products are derived from human blood plasma and are used to treat a number of congenital and acquired immunological abnormalities. In contrast, a different product, intramuscular immune globulin, is used to prevent hepatitis A in travelers and for other conditions. There are also specific immune globulins used for other medical purposes, including prevention of Rh sensitization, tetanus, or rabies. None of these other products is affected by this action.

All donors of plasma that is used to manufacture injectable products for the treatment and prevention of disease are screened to exclude infections with five bloodborne agents, including HCV, hepatitis B, and HIV. Although no cases of viral infections including HIV have been causally linked to any immune globulin product (intravenous or intramuscular preparation), as an extra precautionary measure, the FDA announced that it has been working with all manufacturers to ensure that viral inactiva-